

# Teen suicide: the unspoken epidemic

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Teen suicide is one of the most terrifying yet true things in our world. Suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death for people ages 15-24 and the 6th leading cause of death for people the ages 5-14. That's right, 5 year olds commit suicide too. Teenagers and pre-teens face many challenges every day.

Whether it is stress, confusion, fear, drug abuse, or pressure, it is always there, creating an emotional strain on the person. You may know that depression and suicidal thoughts are both mental disorders and are completely treatable. However, I'm not going to look at it from a scientific perspective, rather, I am going to look at it from an emotional angle. How terrible does somebody have to feel, in order for them to want to end their own life? People who do this are so far gone that they feel totally unwanted, unloved, and unimportant. They feel as if there is no point or reason for their lives.

So, why aren't we doing anything about it? When you see in the newspaper or on the news that a person has committed suicide you think, wow that pretty sad, but then you go on with your life and don't ever think twice about it. Well, this is exactly what the person would have expected! The people who do this are, in my opinion, making a statement. You may think, well what's the good in killing yourself if you are trying to make a difference? But you see, by doing this they are noticed, and recognized which is all they really wanted in the first place. If we just forget about them and ignore the message that they are sending then that is a disgrace to the person. Its saying, ok we get it, we just don't care. It shouldn't be that way.

High school is one of the most emotionally straining times in a teenager's life. With bullying and homework all of the pressure from parents, friends, and teachers, it can all get a bit overwhelming. Not to mention the fact that you are constantly watched and scrutinized about every move you make. All of this can make a person feel unappreciated and unwanted. This leads to depression which sadly can lead to suicide. This of course leads me to think about what could have been done to help that person.

Every day, an average of 14 teens takes their own lives each day. If you knew somebody who did this, would you feel like you could have done something to prevent it? Fortunately I do not know anybody who has attempted or committed suicide. However, I have a very close friend who recently confessed to me that she used to cut herself years ago. We talked about what had been going on at her home at the time and all of the emotional pain she felt. She is one of the strongest people I know and I never would have guessed that she was carrying that burden of sorrow and pain.

I think of this then compare it to how much worse a person must feel in order to commit suicide and it's unimaginable. On average, girls think about attempting suicide twice as much as boys do. On the other hand, boys actually commit suicide four times as much as girls. Also, the rate of teen suicide has increased by 8% in the last year and is the highest it has been in 15 years. So you see, this silent epidemic is a very real and very dangerous thing.

The worst part about it is that it can be prevented and yet, nobody seems to put much effort into it. It seems to me that the world just needs one big

wake up call so that it can see the reality that it has tried to elude for so long. So, my last and most important question for you is, what are YOU going to do about it?